

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for improving performance of a search mechanism based on context-based user feedback data, said method comprising:
 - collecting user information from a user having access to said search mechanism;
 - monitoring of said search mechanism for user behavior data regarding an interaction of said user with said search mechanism to perform a search;
 - monitoring said search mechanism for search mechanism response data regarding said search;
 - identifying at least one non-selected search result that is generated by the search mechanism as part of said search but that is not selected by the user;
 - acquiring the context-based user feedback data describing said search by submitting one or more questions to the user regarding the non-selected search result ~~a performance of the search engine with respect to said search~~ and receiving responses to said questions, said questions prompting the user for information regarding an extent to which a search result corresponds to a search request;
 - using the context-based user feedback data to identify a problem with the search mechanism; and
 - correcting the problem to improve performance of the search mechanism.
2. (original) The method of claim 1, where said user information comprises one or more of the following:
 - the speed of said user's connection to said search mechanism;
 - the type of said user's connection to said search mechanism;
 - a classification of said user's use of said search mechanism;
 - background information concerning said user; or
 - the language which said user is using to perform said search.
3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, where said step of collecting said user information comprises:

requesting said user information from said user; and
accepting responses from said user.

4. (cancelled)

5. (currently amended) A method for improving performance of a search mechanism based on context-based user feedback data, said method comprising:

monitoring of said search mechanism for user behavior data regarding an interaction of a user having access to said search mechanism with said search mechanism to perform a search;

monitoring said search mechanism for search mechanism response data regarding said search;

determining if a snooze request specifying a time period to suspend collection of explicit feedback data is in effect from said user, and, if not, collecting explicit feedback data from ~~said~~ the user;

identifying at least one non-selected search result that is generated by the search mechanism as part of said search but that is not selected by the user;

acquiring context-based user feedback data describing said search by submitting one or more questions to the user regarding the non-selected search result, said context-based user feedback data comprising information regarding an extent to which a search result corresponds to a search request, said context-based user feedback data further comprising said explicit feedback data if said explicit user feedback data was collected;

using the context-based user feedback data to identify a problem with the search mechanism; and

correcting the problem to improve performance of the search mechanism.

6. (canceled)

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 5, where said step of determining if a snooze request is in effect from said user comprises:

determining if said user has issued a snooze request; and

determining if an associated time period associated with said snooze request has elapsed.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 5, further comprising:
storing target data concerning a target value for how often explicit feedback should be collected for searches; and

allowing explicit feedback to be collected only if collecting the explicit feedback would not result in exceeding said target value for how often explicit feedback is collected.

9. (cancelled)

10. (currently amended) A method for improving performance of a search mechanism based on context-based user feedback data, said method comprising:

monitoring of said search mechanism for user behavior data regarding an interaction of the user having access to said search mechanism with said search mechanism to perform a search, said user behavior data comprising data concerning at least one member of a group comprising: query performed by said user, dwell time on said results page, click time on said results page, position of result clicked, more results requested by said user, result dwell time, result page size, and result page actions;

monitoring said search mechanism for search mechanism response data regarding said search;

identifying at least one non-selected search result that is generated by the search mechanism as part of said search but that is not selected by the user;

acquiring context-based user feedback data by submitting one or more questions to the user regarding the non-selected search result ~~a performance of the search engine with respect to said search~~ and receiving responses to said questions ~~context-based user feedback data, said questions prompting the user for information regarding an extent to which a search result corresponds to a search request;~~

using the context-based user feedback data to identify a problem with the search mechanism; and

correcting the problem to improve performance of the search mechanism.

11. (currently amended) A system for improving performance of a search mechanism based on context-based user feedback data, said system comprising:

user information collector for collecting user information from a user having access to said search mechanism;

user behavior monitor for monitoring of said search mechanism for user behavior data regarding an interaction of said user with said search mechanism to perform a search;

context monitor for monitoring said search mechanism for search mechanism response data regarding said search; and

context-based user feedback data accumulator for identifying at least one non-selected search result that is generated by the search mechanism as part of said search but that is not selected by the user, the context-based user feedback data accumulator further for acquiring context-based user feedback data describing said search by submitting one or more questions to said user regarding the non-selected search result ~~a performance of the search engine with respect to said search~~ and receiving responses to said questions, said questions prompting said user for information regarding an extent to which a search result corresponds to a search request, the context-based user feedback data accumulator further for using the context-based user feedback data to identify a problem with the search mechanism and to improve the performance of the search mechanism by correcting the problem.

12. (original) The system of claim 11, where said user information comprises one or more of the following:

the speed of said user's connection to said search mechanism;

the type of said user's connection to said search mechanism;

a classification of said user's use of said search mechanism;

background information concerning said user; or

the language which said user is using to perform said search.

13. (original) The system of claim 11, where said user information collector requests said user information from said user and accepts responses from said user.

14. (currently amended) A system for improving performance of a search mechanism based on context-based user feedback data, said system comprising:

user behavior monitor for monitoring of said search mechanism for user behavior data regarding an interaction of a user having access to said search mechanism with said search mechanism to perform a search;

context monitor for monitoring said search mechanism for search mechanism response data regarding said search;

explicit feedback collection mechanism for making a determination of whether a snooze request specifying a time period to suspend collection of explicit feedback data is in effect from said user, and, if not, collecting explicit feedback data from said user; and

context-based user feedback data accumulator for identifying at least one non-selected search result that is generated by the search mechanism as part of said search but that is not selected by the user, the context-based user feedback data accumulator further for acquiring context-based user feedback data describing said search by submitting one or more questions to the user regarding the non-selected search result, said context-based user feedback data comprising information regarding an extent to which a search result corresponds to a search request, said context-based user feedback data further comprising said explicit feedback data if said explicit user feedback data was collected, the context-based user feedback data accumulator further for using the context-based user feedback data to identify a problem with the search mechanism and to improve the performance of the search mechanism by correcting the problem.

15. (canceled)

16. (previously presented) The system of claim 14, where the determination of whether a snooze request is in effect from said specific user comprises:

a determination of whether said user has issued a snooze request; and

a determination of whether an associated time period associated with said snooze request has elapsed.

17. (previously presented) The system of claim 14, where said explicit feedback collection mechanism stores target data concerning a target value for how often explicit feedback should be collected for searches; and allows explicit feedback to be collected only if collecting the explicit feedback would not result in exceeding said target value for how often explicit feedback is collected.

18. (currently amended) A system for improving performance of a search mechanism based on context-based user feedback data, said system comprising:

user behavior monitor for monitoring of said search mechanism for user behavior data regarding an interaction of a user having access to said search mechanism with said search mechanism to perform a search, said user behavior data comprising data concerning at least one member of a group comprising: requery performed by said user, dwell time on said results page, click time on said results page, position of result clicked, more results requested by said user, result dwell time, result page size, and result page actions;

context monitor for monitoring said search mechanism for search mechanism response data regarding said search; and

context-based user feedback data accumulator for identifying at least one non-selected search result that is generated by the search mechanism as part of said search but that is not selected by the user, the context-based user feedback data accumulator further for acquiring context-based user feedback data describing said search by submitting one or more questions to said user regarding the non-selected search result ~~a performance of the search engine with respect to said search~~ and receiving responses to said questions, ~~said questions prompting said user for information regarding an extent to which a search result corresponds to a search request,~~ the context-based user feedback data accumulator further for using the context-based user feedback data to identify a problem with the search mechanism and to improve the performance of the search mechanism by correcting the problem.